

Trinity Sunday

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Date: 04 June 2023

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[0:00] The church celebrates and remembers the Sunday after Pentecost, the confession of our true faith. The church remembers that we worship the divine majesty of the eternal trinity in the unity of one God.

! And as Church of the Holy Trinity, this also is our parish day. So, I like to think of it as our own personal icing on an already delicious and wonderful cake, as we celebrate this wonderful Sunday in the church here.

The trinity is the fount of all our knowledge, the heart of our doctrine of God. And it is important to get the doctrine of God right, because it informs our belief about the world that we live in, about humanity, about salvation, about the future.

And if we believe the wrong things at the beginning, that is, if we don't rightly believe in who God is, we cannot then rightly grasp what He has done for us, what He has done in the world, what He is doing, and what He's yet to do.

And so, this is important. It is vitally important, not only for our knowledge of God, but I will even mention to say it is important for our salvation, as we've read in the confession of the Athanasius Creed.

[1:38] And so, it's so important that it is the first article of the 39 Articles of Religion, which rightly says, There is but one living God. There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible.

And in unity, this Godhead, there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

That is Article 1 of faith in the Holy Trinity. And now, in talking about the Trinity, I want us to know that we cannot, we cannot plumb the depths, so to speak.

We cannot say all that there is to say about God. We cannot know God exhaustively. That should be apparent to us.

Because after all, you cannot even know your spouse exhaustively, or your children exhaustively. How else then will you conceive to know the infinite God, you being a finite creature?

[2:59] So we cannot know God exhaustively. We will never know God exhaustively. But to say that does not mean that we cannot know God at all. This is the wonderful thing about our triune God.

He is knowable. He is knowable. He has revealed Himself to us so that we can know Him. He has revealed Himself to us through what He has made.

The light of nature, the works of creation and providence, manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God. But even more importantly, He has revealed Himself, not only in nature, but He has revealed Himself even more supremely, for our salvation through the most necessary means.

And what is that necessary means? The Word of God contained in the Holy Scripture. God has revealed Himself to us so that we may know Him and for our salvation, so that we may come to share in the life that is in His eternal life.

And you might ask, why is knowing and confessing the Trinity necessary for our salvation? Why is it necessary for our ongoing life?

[4:22] You know, Trinity Sunday, I hope you see it as you observe the church here. I hope you see Trinity Sunday is the climactic summation of the saving acts of God that we observe since the beginning of the church here at Advent.

We've observed the saving acts of God as we anticipate the incarnation, and as we observe the baptism of our Lord, and His Word, and His life on earth, and then death at the cross, and as we

observe the resurrection, and all the way to the ascension and Pentecost, and then after Pentecost, Trinity Sunday.

It's meant to show us that God reveals Himself to us throughout these redeeming acts of God. God reveals Himself to us as the triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

So we see this in the acts of redemption. But in fact, we also see this disclosure of God, not only in the works of redemption, but in the works from creation.

Genesis that we read this morning starts, not with man. Genesis doesn't start with the world.

Genesis starts with God.

[5:56] In the beginning. God. And John's Gospel sheds light on this Genesis account by telling us that in the beginning was the Word, who was with God, and who was God, and that all things were made through Him.

So we see God as Father and Son. The Father and the Son. And if you go back to Genesis 1-2, we see the Spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters.

And so we see this picture of the triune God, even at creation. We see all three persons of the Trinity at work in creating the world.

God. Unless you think you've read it wrong, or you're reading into it, you have to just jump to verse 26 of Genesis 1, where God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness.

Let us. The us there, in verse 26, is not a plural of majesty. What's a plural of majesty? It's like when the King of England says, We would like to invite you over to Buckingham Palace to have dinner with us.

[7:22] He's just talking about himself, but that's a plural of majesty. Right? But that's not what's going on here. This is God, the triune God, in counsel.

Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Who is God talking to? It cannot be, God cannot be talking to the angels, since God alone is the sole creator of the universe and of mankind.

So He can't be telling the angels, Let us make. That's not what's going on there. And He cannot be talking to the angels because we are not made in the image of angels. We're made in the image of God.

Verse 27 says, God created man in His own image. In the image of God, He created him.

Male and female, He created them. Right from the beginning of creation, we see God, we see God, the triune God, right from the beginning.

[8:31] And then we see that we are created in His image. And by the way, this foreshadows something about mankind. We already, even right from the beginning, what God is revealing something about who we are as His creation.

He's foreshadowed, in some ways, about mankind, our distinctiveness in creation as male and female. Do you see it there?

we're created male and female to reflect His image, to reflect His likeness, both individually as God's creation and collectively, both men and women.

Here is where you go when you talk about the dignity of man. we are created in God's image, male and female, in His image.

There is no superiority here. There is no first-class humans and second-class humans here. Here we see that all who are created, male and female, bear equally, in equal worth and dignity, the image of their Creator God.

[9:49] and we are created, male and female, to be God's vice-regents in the world, to exercise dominion and rule.

You see there in Genesis 1, God made you and I, placed us in His perfect world to share in the life of God and to faithfully steward all that He has made.

and this sharing in the life of God, this sharing in the life of God is what the early church fathers called theosis. What that just means is that although God is God and we are not, we are still made in His image.

And what it means to be made in His image is to be able to partake in the divine nature. That is what it means to be made in His image, that we get to partake in the divine nature.

Not as God, as creations, but because we are in His image, we are able to partake. What it means to partake is to have fellowship with God. What an awesome privilege.

[10:59] And as we do so, we are made fully. And that means as we participate in this life of God, we are fully complete and fully human in the true way that God intended us to be.

as we partake in the life of God, we become truly and fully human. If already you're seeing the problem here with sin and the rot that's invested the world and our own hearts and our human flesh, you're right to see it.

This is why the only truly, fully human person to ever live is Jesus Christ. Because our sin has separated us from this life, this union, this participation in God's life.

Our sin has separated us from it. Our sin has tarnished all of God's created world along with it. But God in His love, it doesn't end it.

Thanks be to God. He did not leave us, leave us in our sin. He did not leave us separated and alienated from the life of God. God saved us from the just consequence of our rebellion.

[12:20] And as we look at this work of salvation, we rightly focus and it's right to do so. We rightly focus in Jesus Christ as our mediator through whom we can have redemption and restoration and reconciliation with God and come back to sharing in the life of God.

But even as we look at salvation, we ought not to look at Jesus alone because just as in creation, we see the three persons of the Godhead.

We also see the three persons of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the work of salvation. It was God, the Father, who chose us.

Paul tells us in Ephesians. God, the Father, who chose us before the foundation of the world, adopted us as sons by predestination through His Son, Jesus Christ.

God, the Father, chose us. God, the Father, John tells us, so loved the world that He gave His Son to die in our stead.

[13:32] It is God, the Father, who loved us that He gave His Son to die in our stead, to carry all our guilt and shame so that all who believe in Him might live. So we see God, the Father, in the works of salvation.

And it's God, the Son, not counting equality with God, something to be grasped, who willingly relinquished His glory and His majesty, who took on our frail humanity, the infinite, suffered as a finite creature all the way to the agony and death of the cross where He secured our redemption. and it's God, the Spirit, who empowered the Son in His earthly ministry, filling Him without measure. It's the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, who raised Him from the dead.

And it's the Holy Spirit who comes forth from the Father and the Son to indwell all of us who are in Christ. So do you see the Trinity at work intimately, intimately at work in your life?

The triune God is intimately involved in our life. And those in Christ, that is all of us who have come to faith in Jesus Christ, we've been invited, we've been invited back.

[14:58] This is the wondrous truth of the Gospel. We've been invited back into participation in the life of God through Jesus Christ. Christ. We do so as creatures, of course, because there's always going to be a distinction between God as Creator and us as creatures.

We will spend eternity with God, but we will never, even in eternity, plumb the depths of the Divine, because there will always be a distinction between creature and Creator.

but there is no such distinction between the three persons of the Trinity. I want you to see that.

That's one of the things we confessed in this wonderful Latinx creed.

They are equally co-eternal, co-equal, sharing in all power and dominion and majesty of one essence.

there is no distinction, there is no hierarchy of superiority or status between the three persons of the Trinity.

[16:08] There is an inseparable operation and unity between them. And what the Church Fathers, the way they describe this inseparable operation is they use this word periphrasis.

It's a wonderful word, it's a complicated word, but this is basically what the word means. It means to dance together in eternal joy. That's the description of the Trinity.

they are dancing together in eternal love and joy for all eternity. I think that's a beautiful rendering as we think about the Trinity. The eternal God exists in Trinity in complete and mutual love and affection and in a dance of joy for all eternity.

You know, sometimes we think God created the world because he needed companionship, because he was bored and he needed us. That's wrong.

That is wrong. The triune God needs nothing and wants for nothing because the triune God dwells in the community of relationship that he has within himself from all eternity.

[17:27] God exists for eternity in perfect allness, in perfect unity, in perfect love, distinctly three persons but not separate.

And at the heart of God is a perfect relationship that is so unified that they are one. This is why we confess three persons one God.

And that is why when Jesus discloses in his teaching about God he speaks of this inseparable operation. he says to us in John 10, I and the father are one.

In John 14 he says to Philip, whoever has seen me has seen the father. The words that I say to you I do not speak of my own authority but the father who dwells in me does his works.

And later in John 14 Jesus tells us that the father will send another helper the spirit of truth given to all those who are in Christ.

[18:35] So the father loves the son and such is the love that he places all things in submission to the son. That is all creation he places it in submission under his feet.

And the son loves the father that he does nothing of his own will but only that which is the will of his father he does. And the Holy Spirit loves the father and the son that he goes where the father sends him and does nothing but point us to the son.

I hope you see the trend already there. What do you notice in this relationship? What is the basis? What is the basis of their oneness or unity?

I hope that you see that it is love. That is it. Whenever you see that triad of the trinity always think of it as what connects and what surrounds it and what is the connection is love.

A love that is not self interested. A love that is self given. this love between them has existed for all eternity.

[20:02] That is why the Bible tells us that God is love. Not that God loves but that he is love.

And so we can conclude that in love because he is love in love he created the world. In love he redeemed the world.

In love he brought us into relationship with himself. And here is the heart of the matter. The Holy Trinity is a mystery as I said before that whose depth we cannot fathom.

But since God has revealed himself we can say this much that it is a loving relationship the Holy Trinity that is is a loving relationship that we are invited to enter into through faith and identification with Jesus Christ.

We are invited to enter into that loving relationship. You and I sinners though we are have been invited to come to experience this love through Jesus' death resurrection ascension and through his pouring out of the Holy Spirit on us at Pentecost.

[21:28] We've been invited to come and experience this love. Now how does that look in our life together here at Church of the Holy Trinity?

How does that look? Well I hope that you see that the self giving love between them between the Trinity is the grounds by which God then commands us to love one another.

God isn't commanding us to do a new thing. He's commanding us to love one another because that is the life. That is what it means to share in the life of God.

The self giving, other interested, other focused love. This is why John can say in his epistle that he who does not love his brother is a liar and the truth is not in him and he does not have fellowship with God because that fellowship with God is to share in this love.

This is why Paul can write to the church in Philippians to do nothing out of selfish ambition! self importance! but in humility to count others more significant than yourselves!

[22:47] To look not only to your own interests but to the interests of others! This is why Jesus our Lord says to us that by this kind of love we show to one another and to the world that we belong to him!

And part of what it means to be godly is to be and what I mean by when I say godly I mean to share in this triune godly love agape love part of what it means is to be other centered rather than self centered like the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit it's to submit to one another as unto the Lord to think of your brother or sister more highly than yourself and to do so does not make you less than it does not make you less than to serve your brother rather it shows that you have indeed the love of God coursing through you through the Holy Spirit imagine imagine if the Holy Spirit says why am I always listed last I'm sick of it I want to come first imagine if the Son says enough of this doing the Father's will you all chuckle because it seems nonsensical and silly even the apathetical exercise seems nonsensical and silly because it's not so and imagine if that were so if there is not love and

unity within the

Trinity if that love and that unity does not exist all reality as we know it will cease to exist if there is no unity of love within the Godhead because it is out of this unity and love that the world as we know it was created that we are redeemed out of our sin back into fellowship with God this is vital essential necessary true to grasp one last thing I want to point out I want to show I want to point out that this way of living this self-giving other focused love is the complete opposite of what the world says will bring you happiness have you noticed the world preaches self-love self-love is the gospel of our culture you don't see anything approximating self-love within the love between the trinity and you don't see anything approximating self-love when you look at the Bible when the Bible commands us to love the love is always other focused other centered but our culture preachers self-love and as he preaches it the cases of depression and suicide have never been higher and sadly those who rebel against God's creational order those who have adopted the satanic lie that they can determine their sex are often at the highest risk of this depression and sadness and suicide and turmoil so we see evidently that self-love or self-definition is not the answer God determines who we are he created us from the beginning male and female he points us to love him and to love others and so first we look to

God as the fountain of all knowledge and the source of all love that's the beginning point as those who were created in his image the answer to life brothers and sisters in Christ the answer to life cannot be found in you or in the world you must look to the one who in love made you you must look to the one who in love came into the world to remake your broken image in his perfect image second the goal of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart a good conscience and a sincere faith love from a pure heart a good conscience and a sincere faith is not something you and I can create we are broken by sin we can't gin up this kind of love we need

[27 : 48] God's help we need to enter into life with God we need his grace that is afforded to us as we enter through Christ into this fellowship with the triune God we need his power to enable us to look beyond ourselves to look beyond our own selfish ends in order to love the way God calls us to love and what would it look like if we enter into this rest and depend on God's strength and grace and Holy Spirit to help us to do this imagine the flourishing among us as the people of God this is why the Bible always points us to this love and points us to submit to one another to love one another because this is what it means to share in the life of God and we need also his power to help us to proclaim this good news to the world that desperately needs it unless you doubt unless you doubt hear God's word hear the son as he speaks to you this is what he says all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit go in the power of God the holy trinity proclaim the good news of his salvation to those who are perishing love those who are loveless love those who are your siblings in the household of God invite all to share in this amazing love relationship and fellowship with the triune

God and as you obey as you go Jesus promises to be with you I am with you he says I am with you always to the end of the age and if he's with you the father and the holy spirit are with you as well let us pray heavenly father we worship you as the creator and sustainer of the universe lord jesus we worship you savior and lord of the world holy spirit we worship you sanctify sanctify of the people of god glory to the father and to the son and to the holy spirit heavenly father we pray that we may live this day in your presence and please you more and more lord jesus we pray that this day we may take up our cross and follow you holy spirit we pray that this day you will fill us with yourself and cause your fruit love joy peace patience kindness goodness faithfulness gentleness and self control to ripen in our life holy blessed and glorious trinity three persons in word god have mercy upon us amen you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you you